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RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON 1026
RUEHML/AMEMBASSY MANILA 0534
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 2402
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2516
RUEHPG/AMEMBASSY PRAGUE 0710
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 GENEVA 002628

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STATE FOR IO/RHS, DRL/MLA, L/HRR

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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [UNHRC](#)

SUBJECT: COMMUNITY OF DEMOCRACIES AMBASSADORS REGROUP
FOLLOWING HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL SESSION

Classified By: Political Counselor Velia De Pirro for reasons E.O. 12958, 1.4 (b)(d).

Summary

11. (U) Ambassador Tichenor hosted Community of Democracies Convening Group (CD/CG) ambassadors Oct. 13 to discuss the second Human Rights Council (HRC) session and ways for the CD to play a more meaningful - and visible - role in Geneva by taking common positions on issues, making joint statements, and possibly introducing draft resolutions at the next session. Opinions of the last HRC session ranged from disappointment (U.S., Peru, Romania) to self-congratulatory elation (India, South Africa) with the remainder falling somewhere in between. Few members had concrete proposals to make on what the CD/CG should focus. Most members, led by Chile, railed against an eleventh-hour attempt by Mali to get a Washington-originated CD/CG statement read into the record of the HRC session without first consulting Geneva-based CD/CG members. End Summary.

Second HRC Session Gets Mixed Reviews

12. (U) The group recognized that the Human Rights Council was in a transitional stage, but most also agreed that pressing issues should have been raised at the last session. Ambassador Tichenor said that the United States was disappointed that the Council could not find a way to address Darfur or begin to lay the ground work for dealing with other serious human rights issues. Peru and Romania expressed the same concerns, with the Romanian representative going as far as saying that members seemed more keen on protecting regional group interests than human rights. To a few raised eyebrows, an upbeat Indian PermRep Swashpawan Singh said he thought the Council was off to a great start and praised it for finding consensus on 1503 Complaints Procedures. He stressed that the Council was simply at the stage of gathering materials for a foundation and would need lots of

political capital if it were to succeed. He further remarked that no one should expect the HRC to be something entirely new. South Africa agreed and said the Council was still in Commission (on Human Rights) mode and it was too early to expect concrete results. Also focusing on the bright side, the Philippines and Poland gave high marks to the interactive dialogue portion of the last session.

Getting the CD/CG Active in the Council

13. (U) Ambassador Tichenor suggested that the Community of Democracies play a more substantive role in the Council's first transitional and formative year. While agreeing with the need to build a strong foundation for the new body, the Ambassador also cautioned that it should not come at the expense of failing to address serious human rights issues. Chilean PermRep Juan Martabit was joined by a chorus of ambassadors and other representatives in saying that the CD/CG meeting was long overdue and encouraged members to start looking for ways to get the CD more active in the Council. He suggested preparing a statement for the third session scheduled for Nov. 27-Dec. 8. Philippines PermRep Enrique Manalo said that despite coming from different regions and having different approaches, CD/CG countries share common positions on a number of thematic issues, which could be raised at peer review and mandate review working group meetings or even in a joint draft resolution. He, Moroccan PermRep Mohammed Loulichki, and Indian PermRep Singh encouraged members to come up with a list of core issues on which everyone could agree. PolCouns noted that previous attempts to get a joint statement had failed, but another

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attempt would be discussed by CD/CG experts before the next ambassadors' meeting. Singh said that the CD/CG should not focus exclusively on the Council and should look to being more active as a group in other UN bodies.

CD/CG in Geneva Protects Own Territory

14. (U) Near the end of the meeting, Chilean PermRep Martabit raised the issue of the Washington-originated CD/CG statement on NGOs that the Mali PermRep had attempted to have read into the record at the last day of the second HRC session. While he fully supported the text, Martabit and most attendees said they were disappointed at Mali - whose representative was not in attendance - for the way in which it was introduced. They were insistent that any text introduced at the Human Rights Council should originate from Geneva and not Washington, New York or elsewhere.

COMMENT

15. (C) The CD/CG in Geneva needs some serious resuscitation. While most participants seemed genuinely pleased that an ambassadors-level CD/CG meeting took place - the last one was in May - no one answered the Ambassador's call at the meeting for a volunteer to host the next lunch. Mission Geneva volunteered to again host the group. (NOTE: Italy has subsequently agreed to host the lunch preceding an experts-level meeting to discuss common CD issues/values/priorities and views. END NOTE.) India and South Africa continue to show reluctance to any kind of joint CD/CG effort in the Council. The Indian PermRep's suggestion of expanding CD/CG efforts beyond the UN human rights body may have been an attempt to divert our focus away from the Council. Mali, the current chair, has not been engaged in CD/CG activities in Geneva, but this has more to do with its staff of four persons rather than a lack of enthusiasm. Post will attempt to work with our traditionally-strong CD partners -- i.e., Chile, Poland, South Korea, and Romania -- and other expert level colleagues to develop a core list of thematic issues that may be further fleshed out into a

possible joint general statement for the next Council session as well as into joint positions for the upcoming UPR and mandate review working group meetings. End Comment.

TICHENOR